

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 2938

EXDIS

DEPT PLEASE PASS SECRETARY FROM ASST SECRETARY ROGERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VE EC

SUBJ: ROGERS CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENTS CARLOS ANDRES

PEREZ OF VENEZUELA AND GUILLERMO RODRIGUEZ LARA

OF ECUADOR

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN CARACAS SATURDAY I MET ALONE FOR AN HOUR WITH PRESIDENTS CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ AND RODRIGUEZ LARA WHO IS HERE ON A STATE VISIT. WE RAN THROUGH A LIST OF ECUADOREAN DIFFICULTIES WITH THE US, INCLUDING THE TRADE ACT, AND GOT INTO PANAMA. THE MEETING COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE CORDIAL. BUT WE SHALL SEE WHETHER IT COMES THROUGH IN THE PRESS AS A PROTEST SESSION BY THE TWO OPEC PRESIDENTS AGAINST THE US TRADE LAW. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING MEETINGS WITH FONMIN ESCOBAR SALOM AND WITH HIM AND PRESIDENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ, CAP GREETED PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ LARA OF ECUADOR AND USHERED HIM AND ME, WITHOUT STAFFS OR EVEN FOREIGN MINISTERS, TO THE VERANDA. RODRIGUEZ, IN HIS TYPICALLY TACTFUL FASHION, EXPLAINED SENTIMENTS OF CORDIAL FRIENDSHIP WHICH ECUADOR ENERETAINED FOR THE UNITED STATES, BUT ALLOWED HIMSELF TO MENTION A FEW PROBLEMS PRESENTLY AND LAMENTABLY AGGRAVATING OUR RELATIONS.

2. THE TRADE ACT, FIRST, NATURALLY. BUT WHEREAS CAP HAD BEEN ANGRY IN OUR EARLIER BILATERAL MEETING, RODRIGUEZ WAS SAD;
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WHEREAS CAP HAD CONDEMNED ALL THE EXCLUSIONARY PROVISIONS OF

TITLE V ROOT AND BRANCH, RODRIQUEZ WAS CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE OPEC PROVISION. HE SPELLED OUT THE CONVENTIONAL ECUADOREAN POSITION, AND EXPLAINED WHY THE TRADE ACT CAUSED ECUADOR TO CONCLUDE THAT IT COULD NOT CONVENIENTLY ATTEND BUENOS AIRES. I RESPONDED ALONG THE LINES OF THE INGERSOLL STATEMENT TO IAECOSOC, SAYING THAT WE WERE HOPEFUL THAT AN OPEC SOLUTION WOULD BE FORTHCOMING SOON. PEREZ HAD NOT BEEN IMPRESSED WITH MY ASSURANCES EARLIER, BUT RODRIGUEZ CERTAINLY WAS. HE PARTICULARLY ASKED WHETHER WE THOUGHT THE SOLUTION COULD BE IN HAND PRIOR TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I SAID YES. HE SAID THAT WOULD BE A VERY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT.

3. RODRIGUEZ THEN MENTIONED ECUADOR'S 200-MILE POSITION. I REFERRED TO THE HOPEFUL VISIT OF OUR LOS TEAM. HE AGREED THAT IT HAD BEEN USEFUL, AND HE HOPED THAT FURTHER PROGRESS COULD BE MADE IN GENEVA. I WAS PLEASED THAT HE REACTED SO POSITIVELY IN FRONT OF CAP.

4. NEXT, ACCESS TO IDB SOFT LOANS. BY THIS TIME I THOUGHT I HAD BEEN FORTHCOMING ENOUGH SO I MURMURED SOMETHING SYMPATHETIC AND QUIT.

5. FINALLY, MILITARY ASSISTANCE. WOULD WE PLEASE BE HELPFUL. I WAS QUIET HERE, TOO, BUT CAP JOINED IN WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE GENERAL DILEMMA FACED BY THE UNITED STATES THROUGHOUT LATIN AMERICA. IF WE SUPPLIED ARMS, WE WERE CRITICIZED IN THE US. IF WE DIDN'T, THE EUROPEANS AND SOVIETS WOULD, AND WE WOULD BE CRITICIZED IN LATIN AMERICA. HE DID NOT TRY TO RESOLVE THE PUZZLE FOR US, HOWEVER. VENEZUELA'S NEW LEADERSHIP IN LATIN AMERICA ONLY GOES SO FAR.

6. CAP THEN REPEATED HIS EARLIER DIAGNOSIS ABOUT THE INCREASING ANTI-AMERICANISM IN LATIN AMERICA. RODRIQUEZ ADDED THAT OUR FUMBLINGS, WITH THE TRADE ACT, THE TUNA BOATS, AND SO FORTH, ONLY PLAYED INTO THE HANDS OF LEFTISTS.

7. CAP THEN ASKED ABOUT PANAMA. I MADE OPTIMISTIC NOISES. HE INSISTED ON TALKING ABOUT THE TERM OF THE TREATY, ARGUING THAT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS WAS A LONG TIME. I TRIED TO SAY THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS ABOVE ALL SHOULD BE LEFT FOR THE MOMENT WITH THE CONFIDENTIAL

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INDIVIDUAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TWO COUNTRIES, BUT I AM NOT SURE CAP IS KEEN FOR A POLICY OF NON-INTERVENTION IN THIS MATTER. HE IS GOING TO PANAMA AFTER MEXICO. GOV IS CONSIDERING A JOINT ARRANGEMENT, INVOLVING COLOMBIA, COSTA RICA AND SOME OTHER NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, FOR FREE USE OF THE CANAL WHEN IT REVERTS TO PANAMA. THIS, AS ANOTHER STEP TOWARD LATIN UNIFICATION. CAP MAY ALSO BE TEMPTED TO ANNOUNCE THIS NEXT WEEK AND MAKE SOME ADDITIONAL NOISES WHILE HE IS THERE ABOUT THE SOLIDARITY OF

LATIN AMERICA WITH PANAMA'S ASPIRATIONS. HE WAS ELOQUENT THAT A FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW WILL COST US DEARLY THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE. AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT IN THAT UNHAPPY EVENT CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ WILL NOT BE A VOICE OF MODERATION.

8. COMMENT. THE MEETING WAS CURIOUS. TWO PRESIDENTS, ALONE, AND SOME BYPLAY BETWEEN THEM, PARTICULARLY ON DEMOCRACY. THE COINCIDENCE THAT THESE WERE TWO OPEC MEMBERS MAY OR MAY NOT COLOR THE PUBLIC REACTION. BUT I INTEND TO SAY PUBLICLY THAT I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL THEM ABOUT THE TRADE LAW'S POSITIVE ASPECTS.

9. IT WAS ALSO INTERESTING THAT IN THIS MEETING THERE WAS NO MENTION OF YOUR TRIP, EXCEPT CAP'S STATEMENT THAT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA FOR YOU TO SEE THE HEMISPHERE TO IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF LATIN ASPIRATIONS. RODRIQUEZ AGREED BUT MADE NO SUGGESTION THAT YOU OR I VISIT ECUADOR.

10. AND IT WAS FINALLY CURIOUS THAT THERE WAS NO MENTION OF CUBA, AND ONLY A PASSING REFERENCE TO OUR POSITION AT QUITO. END COMMENT.

ASENCIO

NOTE BY OC/T: EXDIS CAPTION ADDED PER S/S-O, MR.HOGANSON
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